**GENDER INTEGRATION GUIDANCE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Aren’t the terms gender and women the same?**

Gender is often misunderstood as referring only to women but this is incorrect. Gender refers to the socially defined and culturally learned roles and attributes associated with being a man, woman, girl, or boy, as well as the relationship between them. Gender encompasses all people, and women are just one gender category.

Men are another gender category. Increasingly the issues of men, often referred to as issues of “masculinity” are being mainstreamed into projects. Masculinity refers to a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with men and boys.[[1]](#footnote-2) Masculinity programs aim to involve men in conversations about what it means to be men and how to change the negative gender stereotypes and norms that men confront. Among our LGI projects, the projects in Nicaragua and Honduras integrated masculinity-focused activities.

In some countries, additional gender categories beyond man and woman are used. This third (and sometimes fourth or fifth) category of gender is being legally recognized in some countries like in India to recognize the hijra. Other examples of a third gender category include the berdash among some Native American tribes and the xanith of Oman.

**If we’re working with women, aren’t we already integrating gender in our project?**

While some projects may require a targeted focus on women, simply including women-centered activities in your project is likely not sufficient to effectively integrate gender. Best practice is to examine and address the differing needs of men, women, boys, and girls. For instance, in conflict situations, men are more likely to be involved in fighting; as a result, men often have specific post-conflict needs, such as health services or post-conflict counseling. A gender-integrated project would address the specific and differing needs of men and women.

**What about social inclusion?**

Social inclusion refers to a process of improving the terms for a diverse set of individuals and groups to take part in society and to reduce discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, caste, age, religion, or other social characteristic. It aims to empower poor and marginalized people to take advantage of burgeoning global opportunities and create opportunities for all people to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives and that they enjoy equal access to markets, services and political, social and physical spaces.[[2]](#footnote-3) Addressing gender issues in programs is one aspect of social inclusion.

**Will it cost more and take more time to integrate gender issues into our projects?**

Addressing gender issues in projects might take additional money and time or it might mean that you have to allocate your time and money differently. Integrating gender issues adequately into projects may require adjusting time and financial resources. You may not be able to reach the same number of people or expand into new areas or include all the activities you initially had considered in order to make sure that you are reaching both men and women. These issues need to be discussed during the design phase of the DMEL. There will be trade-offs and we encourage you to make the best decision you can keeping in mind that we want the most men and women to be able to participate in and benefit from LWR programs, while also having a sustainable impact on their lives.

In particular, we find the most amount of cost/time is incurred during the needs assessment phase, and linked to that, the additional training that may be needed for staff. Other examples include the subsequent project design process, M&E plan development and data analysis, and evaluation planning, which may also take a bit longer and may require contributions from a gender expert (international or local) for support. Lastly, periodic check-ins by a gender expert can help the team appropriately address any emerging issues.

Initially it may take you more time to learn how to do this, just as it takes more time at first for you to learn other new DMEL tools and updates. Planning enough time for each DMEL step is critical to being able to learn the new tools without feeling like this is too difficult, additional work or a distraction. Our best recommendation is to give yourself enough time to do this well and ask for help. As you become familiar with how to integrate gender issues, the process will become easier.

**How can I work on gender issues when it’s not my area of expertise?**

We don’t expect everyone to have the technical capacity to undertake this immediately. The DMEL and GIG sheets provide basic guidance so that you can begin to learn how to use gender analysis in projects however you may need additional help. We will do our best to provide opportunities, such as gender training, on a periodic basis so that you can build your capacity to do this work and if you need additional support you should seek guidance from the Program Quality and Technical Support team.

**If a project is collecting sex-disaggregated data, is it considered a gender-integrated project?**

Collecting and monitoring sex-disaggregated data is a necessary, but not sufficient, component of gender integration. In isolation, sex-disaggregated data cannot tell us much; it needs to be analyzed to provide the full story. This analysis then should inform all of the other project’s components, such as designing projects that address both men and women’s needs, making sure that men and women have equal access to project resources and activities, and conducting gender-responsive reflection sessions during evaluation. These practices, all contribute to projects that give men and women equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LWR’s work.

**How do we manage competing priorities?**

We understand that over the life of a project, including during its design, you will be asked to include many different considerations. This might mean adding a resilience component or addressing climate change in agriculture, or giving special attention to capacity building for the partner. We recognize and empathize with the fact that all of these demands are competing for the same resources and you may find it difficult to know how to make a good decision.

The guidance in the GIG sheets and under the Gender Considerations sections in the DMEL provide a range of good practices for different processes in the DMEL. You may find that you are unable to do all of them, but you can do some of them. We want to see evidence that you are taking these issues into consideration and are doing your best to support projects from which men and women can benefit. You may have to make decisions to do fewer activities, scale back the number of targeted beneficiaries or stretch out the timeline of your project, which is okay if that is what will work best in your context.

We encourage you to discuss these constraints and competing priorities openly with your staff and supervisors to identify strategies that can accommodate all the demands.

**What kind of help is LWR going to be providing?**

LWR will do its best to provide you with the support you need to learn how to integrate gender issues into projects. We don’t expect everyone to have the technical capacity to undertake this immediately.

In addition to the DMEL and the GIG sheets, there are additional resources highlighted from other agencies, NGOs, and donors that describe how to do this. We will do our best to find resources that are available in multiple languages.

We are also identifying ways to provide opportunities, such as gender training, on a periodic basis so that you can build your capacity to do this work. We would like your help in understanding where you think we need yours skills built to be able to do this better.

If at any point you need additional support you should contact the Program Quality and Technical Support (“Q”) team. We will do our best to meet your needs, especially if identified well in advance, though we recognize that in the beginning we may not be able to meet all of the country teams’ needs for technical support in gender.

**Will gender integration be required?**

We do not expect that every project will be required to integrate gender issues immediately. However, over the medium to long term we would like all projects to integrate gender issues and be able to meet the gender considerations in the DMEL Minimum Quality Standards. We expect that eventually integrating these considerations will become common practice.

At some point in the future, we will be able to conduct optional gender reviews of a project, upon request, to help the project team consider ways to strengthen the gender components in a project. Eventually, the gender reviews will be incorporated into the M&E Systems Reviews and will be conducted on a sample of projects.

Once again, we are here to help you meet all the requirements of the DMEL so that you can feel confident you are designing and implementing the best quality projects possible. This includes aiming to ensure that projects adequately identify the different constraints men and women face, and identifying strategies for ensuring our projects can meet their objectives in the most effective and inclusive manner.

**Who is responsible for doing this?**

Each of us is responsible. Of course, different people will be responsible for implementing different elements of the DMEL and for supporting gender integration efforts, and it may depend on the particular team you’re on, or the project or proposal you’re working on. If you are a Program Manager or Regional M&E Manager, you will likely be the person most immediately affected by the changes. Country Directors will be required to do less of the gender integration efforts with partners, but we ask that you become familiar with the tools and be supportive of the process, providing help where you can and encouraging your staff to seek additional support when needed. Headquarters-based Program Officers, and Deputy and Regional Directors, also play a key role in oversight for making sure gender is integrated well. They also provide internal advocacy for maintaining budget lines, time and staff resources dedicated to gender. Lastly, the Program Quality and Technical Support Team (Q Team) will continue to advocate for gender integration in projects, make additional tools and learning opportunities available, and plan for direct technical assistance in gender to targeted projects as needed.

**How do we know we’re doing it well?**

Start by asking your colleagues that have worked on the LGI model projects (India, Nicaragua, Uganda). They have seen changes in the activities and results of their projects. They also hear the feedback regularly, which surprises them, from beneficiaries and local partners about how impactful the gender aspects are on the rest of the project outcomes. They can give you an idea of the qualitative signs to look for.

We’re looking ahead to choosing or developing tools that help us better answer this question. Disaggregating indicators, targets, and actual data by sex, and conducting a thoughtful analysis on the information is an excellent measurement tool. Commissioning an overall gender analysis review on the project – at any stage of the project cycle- is another option. Ensuring key questions on gender are included in the final evaluation is also important.

1. Although the opposite of masculinity is femininity, this term is not used in development programs to describe women-focused activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Adapted from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/social-inclusion>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)